

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 26, 2018

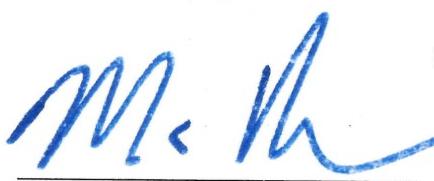
The Honorable R. D. James
Assistant Secretary of the Army – Civil Works
Department of the Army
108 Army Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310-0108

Dear Assistant Secretary James:

We write in strong support of the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) Post-Authorization Change Report (PACR) submitted today by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). We also urge your office to coordinate an expedited review of the proposal to ensure a timely decision that, if positive, would allow Congress to be able to consider authorizing this ecologically-significant modification of the CEPP in the current Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) cycle.

To develop this PACR, the SFWMD utilized authority provided by Section 203 of WRDA 1986, as amended, along with technical assistance provided by the USACE. The PACR recommends increasing the storage and water quality treatment capacity of the CEPP by implementing another increment of the Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and additional conveyance improvements between Lake Okeechobee and the planned storage reservoir. According to the SFWMD, the recommended plan will provide an average of 370,000 acre-feet per year of water from Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades ecosystem, representing a 76% increase in the volume of water flow currently authorized under the CEPP and substantial progress towards restoration of America's River of Grass. In conjunction with other authorized CERP projects, this project modification will provide significant benefits to South Florida's four major estuaries with substantial increases in clean, freshwater delivery to Florida Bay and Biscayne Bay, and dramatic reductions in damaging discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee Estuary and the Indian River Lagoon.

Once again, we strongly support the CEPP PACR submitted today by the SFWMD and urge its timely consideration via an expedited vertical team review. Your efforts to thoroughly and quickly consider this proposal are critical for Congress to have a reasonable opportunity to authorize these modifications to the CEPP New Water component, solidifying and deepening the indispensable federal-state partnership on Everglades Restoration. Thank you for your consideration of this request.



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator

Sincerely,



Bill Nelson
U.S. Senator

Bill Posey

Bill Posey (FL-08)
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Val B. Demings (FL-10)
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